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Chair: Mr. Gunnarsson (Iceland)

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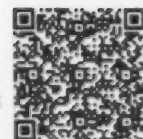
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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 5: Election of officers of the Main Committees

1. **The Chair** said that Ms. del Águila of Guatemala, who had been elected as Rapporteur of the Committee in May 2017, had resigned from that position. The Group of Latin American and Caribbean States had endorsed the candidature of Mr. Molina Linares of Guatemala to replace her as Rapporteur of the Committee at its seventy-second session.

2. *Mr. Molina Linares of Guatemala was elected Rapporteur of the Committee at its seventy-second session by acclamation.*

Statement by the Chair

3. **The Chair** said that at a recent informal briefing, he had expressed his condolences to those affected by extreme weather events in the Caribbean and in the United States. In addition, tragic events had taken place in the host country during the previous night. All senseless terror, regardless of where it took place, was to be condemned.

4. In recent years, the Committee had become more effective and he intended to carry out his functions as chair in the most efficient manner possible. The work of the Committee affected the lives of millions around the world and concerned basic rights such as the rights to water, sanitation and development, as well as the ability of all people to live free from violence and discrimination. Given the importance of those issues, all members should participate in its work in a respectful manner and engage on the substance of contentious matters.

Organization of work (A/72/250, A/C.3/72/1, A/C.3/72/L.1 and A/C.3/72/L.1/Add.1/Rev.1)

5. **The Chair** said that document A/C.3/72/L.1, containing the organization of the work of the Committee, had been drawn up on the basis of past practice in the Committee and consultations with the Secretariat. The note by the Secretariat concerning the allocation of agenda items was contained in document A/C.3/72/1. The list of documents issued under each agenda item was contained in document A/C.3/72/L.1/Add.1/Rev.1. The Secretary of the Committee would continue to update the Committee on the status of documentation throughout the session.

6. Recalling the guidelines concerning the conduct of the Committee's work in chapter II of the report of the General Committee (A/72/250), the Chair stressed

the importance of punctuality and adherence to time limits for statements and rights of reply and to deadlines for submission of proposals and inscription on the list of speakers. He also highlighted specific guidelines contained in the report of the General Committee concerning the need to reduce the number of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and to ensure their brevity in order to maximize their political impact. Finally, the Committee should adopt the "all protocol observed" principle, whereby participants refrained from listing standard protocol expressions during their statements.

7. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee), referring to paragraph 13 of document A/72/250, said that attempts had been made in recent years to eliminate introductions of draft resolutions as there was no procedural requirement to do so and it was time-consuming. Main sponsors were urged not to introduce draft resolutions except when those resolutions were new.

8. **The Chair** referred the Committee to the revised list of special procedure mandate-holders and other experts scheduled to make presentations to the Committee at its current session. He took it that, following past practice, the Committee wished to extend invitations to the special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council and other experts to submit their reports to and interact with the Committee.

9. *It was so decided.*

10. **The Chair** said that he took it that the Committee wished to approve the organization of work as contained in the documents A/C.3/72/L.1 and A/C.3/72/L.1/Add.1/Rev.1, subject to amendment.

11. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 137: Programme planning

12. **The Chair** said that pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/6, in which the General Assembly re-emphasized the role of the plenary and the Main Committees in reviewing and taking action on the appropriate recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination relevant to their work, in accordance with regulation 4.10 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, the Assembly had decided to allocate that item to all the Main Committees and to its plenary to enhance discussion of evaluation, planning, budgeting

and monitoring reports. No action was expected under agenda item 137.

Agenda item 27: Social development

- (a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/72/158 and A/72/211)**
- (b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (A/72/159, A/72/161, A/72/166, A/72/189 and A/72/190)**

13. **Ms. Bas** (Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development) introduced six reports of the Secretary-General and one note by the Secretariat under agenda items 27 (a) and (b).

14. **Mr. Liu Zhenmin** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that, although significant advances had been made in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the rate of progress in many areas was too slow to be able to meet the targets by 2030. An enabling environment was needed, which should encompass areas such as raising economic growth and preventing natural disasters and conflict. Economic growth remained disappointingly slow. The most urgent task, however, was to support countries that were most in need, specifically countries in special situations. Based on the current growth trajectory, and without a reduction in income inequality, nearly 35 per cent of the population in least developed countries, highly indebted poor countries and countries in fragile and conflict affected countries would remain in extreme poverty in 2030. More than one billion people had been lifted out of extreme poverty, but eradicating poverty altogether would be far more challenging.

15. Progress towards sustainable development would require inclusive growth and full and productive employment. However, the global economy was not creating enough quality jobs, owing to the current disconnect between economic growth and job creation. Around 600 million jobs needed to be created by 2030 to combat the predicted rise in global unemployment and to keep pace with the expansion of the working age population. Regarding social inclusion, countries must continue to foster a culture of inclusiveness and address the concerns of excluded groups. The challenges faced by young people, such as unemployment, remained at the top of the agenda, while the potential of older persons must be seized and their vulnerabilities addressed.

16. Universal access to social protection was needed to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty, yet only 45 per cent of the world's population had been effectively covered by at least one social protection scheme in 2016. The forthcoming report by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on the world social situation in 2017 would underscore that social protection systems had the potential to promote inclusive development.

17. His department was able to offer support and expertise on strengthening national capacity to implement all dimensions of the 2030 Agenda. Capacity-building in data collection and disaggregation in particular would be key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. He was greatly encouraged by the many new proposals and initiatives that had been announced by Heads of State and Government during the general debate of the General Assembly and by the emphasis being placed on collaboration in the quest to achieve sustainable development and eradicate poverty. A coherent approach to tackling the current challenges was vital and efforts to achieve sustainable development, prevent conflicts and sustain peace must be interlinked and well coordinated.

18. **Ms. Yáñez Loza** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/72/158) highlighted the significant social and economic disparities between and within countries. The international community must therefore redouble its efforts to eradicate poverty and tackle inequality. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda was under way, but the current rate of progress would be inadequate to achieve sustainable development for all, especially the poorest and the most vulnerable.

19. The World Summit for Social Development remained a key point of reference for social development and the Group was committed to achieving the goals it had set, in particular those of poverty eradication, full employment and social integration. The Group was therefore seriously concerned by the uneven progress towards fulfilling the interrelated commitments made at the Summit as well as by such challenges as slow economic growth, the volatility of financial markets, youth unemployment, climate change, global health threats, humanitarian crises and corruption. Progress in social development could only be made and maintained if they were addressed.

20. Member States must fulfil their obligations under international law to remove obstacles to the full realization of the rights of peoples to self-determination, in particular those living under colonial and foreign occupation and other forms of alien domination. International cooperation, including South-South and triangular cooperation, was essential to the achievement of the internationally agreed goals. Poverty eradication was a moral imperative and social exclusion remained a challenge in many parts of the world. New approaches to tackling poverty were needed, which would require both political will and the necessary funding. It would be impossible to significantly reduce poverty in all its forms without sufficient financing and without international cooperation.

21. The International Year of the Family and its follow-up activities had served as catalysts for developing and strengthening policies and programmes on matters such as domestic violence and work-life balance, and for establishing the related good practices. The Group welcomed the priority accorded to issues affecting young people and persons with disabilities, and called upon the international community to increase its technical and financial support in areas such as education and accessibility. States must take account of the realities of an ageing population in their efforts to eradicate poverty and the international community must work together to ensure that the rights of older persons were upheld.

22. **Mr. Aboulatta** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that remarkable advances had been made in Africa in areas such as primary school enrolment and the representation of women in decision-making. Furthermore, the inclusion and empowerment of vulnerable groups was a key element of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, which had been adopted by the African Union in 2015. However, the quality of education and health-care services remained a concern and the eradication of poverty in all its forms must be an overarching priority if no one was to be left behind.

23. The institution of the family was central to African society and should be accorded greater attention by the United Nations, since families would play a key role in achieving sustainable development. When developing national policies to address the needs of older persons, member States were guided by the African Union Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing. However, support would be needed for implementation and adequate resources must be allocated. Youth development and empowerment were central to Africa's development agenda and the African

Youth Decade (2009-2018), a plan of action for achieving the objectives of the African Youth Charter, was being implemented. Despite the efforts of member States to make progress on disability-related issues such as justice, rights and awareness-raising within the framework of the African Union Disability Architecture adopted by the African Union in 2012, only a small proportion of persons with disabilities in Africa had access to care, rehabilitation and education, and disability still represented a threat to survival in Africa.

24. In spite of the gains made, however, the general development crisis in Africa remained fundamentally unchanged and African countries continued to fall at the bottom of any list measuring social development and economic activity. A higher priority should be accorded to the development of agricultural cooperatives, which were able to reach the most excluded sections of the population. The cooperatives provided smallholder farmers with access to resources such as credit, land and technology, enabling them to increase their productivity and their income, and thus escape poverty. The Group was committed to improving domestic financing on health and would require ongoing support from the international community to halt the spread of HIV and AIDS. The discrimination and stigma faced by people living with HIV and AIDS, especially in the area of employment, was a matter of particular concern.

25. **Ms. Martinic** (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends of Older Persons, said that the increase in the number of older persons and the growing global trend of ageing societies presented both an opportunity to benefit from the many contributions made by older persons to society and the challenge to design and implement policies to promote social inclusion, intergenerational solidarity and the full and effective enjoyment, promotion and protection of the human rights and dignity of older persons. Given that globally older persons were projected to outnumber young people by 2030 and roughly equal the number of children by 2050, it was urgent to recognize the need to pay greater attention to the specific challenges affecting older persons, including in the field of social development. Older persons must be fully empowered to enable them to make an effective contribution to the social, economic and sustainable development of their societies. In that regard, designing and implementing programmes, policies and adequate legal frameworks allowing the full social inclusion of older persons and their participation in social, economic, cultural, civil and political life, free from restraints and all forms of discrimination and violence, would ensure their

dignity, empowerment and ability to fully and effectively enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms. It was also the key to achieving success in the 2030 Agenda and an opportunity to reaffirm the commitment reflected in the Political Declaration adopted by the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid to respond to the opportunities and challenges of population ageing in the twenty-first century and to promote the development of a society for all ages. The international community must work together to ensure the well-being of older persons, while addressing issues relating to their social integration and fostering intergenerational partnerships and solidarity, to achieve full social development, leaving no one behind.

26. **Mr. O'Brien** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the European Union and its member States remained fully committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. For example, through its new development policy, the European Consensus on Development, the European Union sought to support the achievement of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals in an integrated manner, working more effectively with all partners, including by forging new relationships. It would continue to target its assistance at the least developed and conflict-affected countries but would also strengthen its partnerships with middle income countries, including the more advanced developing countries, which would be critical to achieving the 2030 Agenda and addressing social development and the rising inequalities within countries.

27. The European economy was in its fifth year of recovery, and growth had been accompanied by gradual improvements in labour markets and in the social situation across the European Union. Despite such improvements, however, divergences remained between European countries, regions and social groups in terms of working and living conditions. A key priority in Europe, therefore, was to renew the process of convergence by pursuing policies to ensure both sustainable growth and social inclusion.

28. The European Union's contribution was spread across policy areas. The European Commission had proposed a European pillar of social rights to help to ensure that living and working conditions in Europe converged for the better through policies geared towards better-functioning labour markets and inclusive welfare systems. The Youth Guarantee, which

was supporting the gradual improvement in youth employment, had created broad momentum for reforms of education and labour market systems and provided tailor-made jobs and training support programmes for young people throughout Europe. There were currently 1.5 million fewer young unemployed persons in the European Union compared with 2013. Given that there would be only two people of working age for every older person in the European Union by 2060, there was a need to boost the efficiency of European social protection systems, without losing sight of inclusiveness and adequacy.

29. With regard to work-family balance in Europe, although it was encouraging that household and care chores were increasingly shared between women and men, there was a need to continue working on solutions that could give all people a real choice as to how to shape their lives in terms of rearing children, pursuing a career and caring for older persons, which would benefit families and children. It would also help to increase the participation of women in the labour market, thereby reducing the difference between men and women in employment, which still stood at more than 10 per cent and increased to 30 per cent for families with young children. European Union policies also aimed to reduce the gender pay gap.

30. Persons with disabilities in the European Union continued to be overrepresented among those without employment and underrepresented in tertiary education. The European Union, as a party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, continued to mainstream disability issues into actions to combat unemployment and worked towards their full participation in society on an equal basis with others. In that regard, a proposal was being developed for a European accessibility act to facilitate access for persons with disabilities to essential goods and services in the single market.

31. All those efforts were part of the European Union's proactive and coherent strategy to anchor sustainability in regulation and policymaking with a view to ensuring a future-proof society. The European Union needed to do better at equipping all people with the skills and training needed to compete in open and changing markets and to ensure that its education system provided skills that met labour market demands. The economy would increasingly require a broader set of digital, service and people-oriented skills. The European Commission's new Skills Agenda for Europe offered the framework for Governments, stakeholders and citizens to make that shift.

32. The European Union was setting the ground for a new debate with citizens, social partners and Governments about the future of Europe, to discuss how to sustain standards of living, create more and better jobs, equip people with the right skills and create more unity within society, while fully taking into account the 2030 Agenda. Those issues would be addressed at the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth, to be held on 17 November 2017 in Gothenburg, Sweden.

33. **Mr. Yahye** (Netherlands), speaking as a youth delegate, said that people who held fundamentally different views did not always co-exist peacefully, which could make Governments, leaders and institutions fear diversity. He had learned, however, that the problems faced by dynamic and diverse societies were the result not of diversity itself but of the failure by Governments and institutions to connect with the different groups that they served.

34. Governments and institutions that aimed to ensure the full participation of the younger generations thereby eliminated one of the most important root causes of extremism: the feeling of being left out. Young people would feel represented by governing bodies if policymakers actively consulted them when making decisions, many of which affected young people themselves. It was not enough to speak only with highly educated young people; those from disadvantaged neighbourhoods and rural areas must also be included. It was essential not only to explain decisions to young people but also to listen to them to discover how they were already working to prevent problems.

35. Young people in the Netherlands were changing their communities for the better. The Youth Supervision Team in Arnhem, for example, was a youth-led initiative involving young people from various backgrounds to keep the city centre safe. Violent incidents and vandalism had decreased substantially, not by fining young people or approaching them with hostility, but by connecting with them on a personal level.

36. It was time to live up to the commitments made in Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on youth and peace and security. In 2017, he would speak with young people from all over his country about radicalization and violent extremism. The diversity of the Netherlands would provide different perspectives on the root causes of those problems and how to prevent them.

37. **Ms. Abdelkawy** (Egypt) said that her country had created a strategy for implementing the 2030 Agenda

whose centrepiece was the provision of a social safety net for all, including marginalized groups such as children, the elderly and persons with disabilities. Since October 2016, four sessions of the National Youth Conference had convened, providing a forum for dialogue between the State, organizations, and Egyptian youth. The Conference would hold an international forum for direct dialogue between youth from around the world and officials and decision-makers. The forum would include roundtable discussions on the role of youth in fighting terrorism as well as a model United Nations.

38. The Egyptian Government was responsible for the promotion and protection of the family, which was defined in the Constitution as the basis of society. The country celebrated the Day of the Family in March every year. A new department of the Egyptian Ministry of Social Solidarity was strengthening the institutional framework for family and childhood policies. It was implementing projects to prevent child labour, especially in rural areas, and to set up nurseries and care institutions for senior citizens. Egypt had proposed a resolution concerning the protection of the family at the Human Rights Council.

39. The Egyptian parliament, which had 10 members with disabilities, had created a committee for disability affairs. The President had announced that 2018 would be the year of persons with disabilities in Egypt. A monthly stipend had been allocated for persons with disabilities, schools had been made more inclusive and building codes were being reviewed to ensure greater accessibility.

40. **Mr. Arriola Ramírez** (Paraguay) said that his country's national development plan had been aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and its institutional architecture was being redesigned accordingly. Economic growth in Paraguay had been steady over the past few years, and poverty indices were also falling, but the complete eradication of poverty posed a major challenge. Structural factors limited the opportunities available to a significant percentage of the population, and disproportionately disadvantaged women, children, indigenous peoples and rural populations.

41. Social investment was being gradually increased to enable poor people to benefit from economic growth. A number of social protection programmes were being implemented, including the cash transfer programme Tekopora. The Government was also carrying out a substantial programme of construction of affordable social housing to meet the needs of families with limited economic means. His delegation

reiterated its commitment to the 2030 Agenda, in the belief that the achievement of sustainable development would contribute to more peaceful and socially cohesive societies.

42. **Ms. Kirianoff Crimmins** (Switzerland) said that Switzerland would continue to work tirelessly to uphold its international commitments. Across the world, deep inequalities persisted; nevertheless, there were signs of improvement, and social protection measures had played a key role in that regard. The majority of countries provided social benefits, but not all who were eligible for those benefits claimed them, owing to problems of access encountered. Several cantons in Switzerland were examining the accessibility of their benefits. At the federal level, efforts were being made to ensure that the public was better informed. Governments must facilitate access to benefits, which required effective, responsible institutions that were open and accessible to all, in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 16.

43. **Ms. Fankhauser** (Switzerland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that she had travelled the length and breadth of her country to gather the views of young people from a variety of backgrounds. Young people could offer a new perspective on problems and were important vectors of change. While they had spoken about many different subjects, social inclusion was at the heart of many of their concerns.

44. Governments were responsible for providing the appropriate legal, economic and political frameworks to achieve social inclusion; the rest was up to individuals. She was particularly concerned by the attitude of individuals and leaders towards marginalized minorities and their inclusion in society. Instead of being marginalized, they should be viewed as agents of change. Openness and tolerance were vital to the development of a more inclusive world. The social inclusion of all, based on tolerance and openness, was the foundation of all peaceful societies, which was a universal goal.

45. **Ms. Nunoshiba** (Japan) said that her country placed great importance on the holistic empowerment of individuals, including women, persons with disabilities and older persons. In that regard, it was important to create a more inclusive society by supporting and encouraging persons with disabilities to participate in society. Building on the momentum of the Paralympic Games to be held in Tokyo in 2020, Japan had been working to remove social barriers to create an inclusive society in which everybody fully enjoyed their rights. In February 2012, it had adopted the Universal Design 2020 action plan, which it would

continue to implement by promoting universal design and a society free from mental barriers. In the area of global health, Japan had been strongly promoting universal health coverage to secure health for all. During the high-level week of the General Assembly in 2017, it had co-hosted a side event on universal health coverage, and in December, it would host a forum on the topic in Tokyo.

46. As part of its efforts to create a society in which no one was left behind, Japan had been supporting social development in Africa by making contributions towards not only economic development but also high-quality growth, such as through the improvement of health-care systems, comprehensive education and the empowerment of women. In August 2016, Japan had hosted the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, in Nairobi, at which it had declared its commitment to invest approximately \$30 billion from both governmental and private sector sources.

47. In November 2017, her Government would host the World Assembly for Women 2017, the focus of which would be universal topics such as female entrepreneurs, gender equality and natural disasters, and women and media.

48. **Ms. Holzhacker** (Austria), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, in the light of recent democratic decisions, such as the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union (Brexit) and the elections in the United States of America, which had clearly demonstrated the impact that the votes and voices of young people, or the lack thereof, could have at both the national and international levels, it was essential to build the confidence of young people in political processes and their understanding thereof. Young people were still too often marginalized in formal voting and decision-making processes, often having no say in decisions drastically affecting them, not because they were restrained or hesitant with regard to politics, but as a direct result of their depiction as passive and in need of help, rather than as participants in such processes. Intergenerational dialogue was a fundamental component of the creation of sustainable democratic systems and equality between generations. In that regard, young people also needed to be more involved in decision-making, as policies drafted without insight into the needs of the younger generations were not sustainable.

49. Without knowledge, however, young people could not take action, and civic and political education were therefore essential for peaceful societies, especially given that populism was spreading fast

around the world. Young people must seize their chances to participate in political procedures, as participation would enable them to choose the decision makers that best represented them or to become the decision makers themselves. Furthermore, cooperation among young people across the globe was of the utmost importance.

50. **Ms. Kuret** (Slovenia) said that her country firmly believed that enabling the full participation of older persons in social, cultural, economic, civic and political life was an essential part of creating truly cohesive societies and ensuring equal treatment for all in the exercise of their rights, obligations and fundamental freedoms. In the first half of 2017, Slovenia had conducted an intensive public consultation on a draft national strategy for a long-lived society, which was based on the concept of "active ageing", whereby opportunities for health, participation and security would be optimized to improve the quality of life of ageing persons. In order to implement the goals of the strategy, specific departmental action plans would be developed, while ensuring that any nationally devised measures were reinforced by relevant international standards. The interconnectedness of the welfare of the younger and older generations was often overlooked, and the approach of choosing one over the other was misguided, harmful to intergenerational solidarity and could lead to social exclusion.

51. **Ms. Carli** (Slovenia), speaking as a youth delegate, noting that inclusiveness was a core aspiration of the 2030 Agenda, said that current pressing issues needed to be addressed in a coordinated and inclusive manner. In Slovenia, the younger generation faced many challenges, including structural unemployment, unstable employment and a lack of skills for, or a mismatch of skills with, the future of work, all of which delayed the transition to adulthood and the full autonomy of young people. There was a need to ensure the realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, provide decent and stable work opportunities to young people, empower young girls and women, strive to develop effective mechanisms for the inclusion and social protection of vulnerable groups, ensure access to high-quality education worldwide, embrace the potential of new technologies, use the existing tools of international cooperation and develop new, more progressive ones, and strengthen efforts to preserve and protect the environment. Given the pressing challenges faced by other generations, in particular the older generation, intergenerational cooperation, dialogue and solidarity were essential.

52. **Ms. Salminen** (Finland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, to implement Security Council resolution 2250 (2015), she encouraged all Member States to involve young people in peacebuilding efforts and decision-making processes at all levels. In Finland, for example, young people were participating in decision-making processes at the local level through youth councils.

53. The rights of young women and girls, which were often neglected and violated, were human rights. Girls and women should have universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights and equal access to high-quality education. States should take immediate measures to eliminate discrimination on the basis of gender stereotypes. The international community should work hard to change the culture around gendered skill sets and careers to achieve the full potential of societies. Similarly, the right not to be discriminated against on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity was a human right that should be protected at all times.

54. Human rights were also the rights of people on the move, many of whom were young. In Finland, as in the rest of Europe, growing migration flows had brought about an increase in hate speech towards migrants and refugees, contributing to an atmosphere of fear, discrimination and demonization. To tackle that, hate speech must be denounced and countered. The dignity and equal human rights of migrants and refugees must be safeguarded.

55. **Mr. How** (Singapore) said that his country welcomed the attention given to youth development in the 2030 Agenda and in particular the report of the Secretary-General on youth development links to sustainable development (A/72/190). Singapore was committed to building a more caring and inclusive society and recognized the need to equip its young people with the skill sets needed for the future. In that regard, it had invested heavily in its education system and made subsidies available for children in need. Convinced that education remained the main vehicle for social mobility, it had designed its education system so as to provide all children, regardless of their socioeconomic status, with a good start in life. The 20 special education schools in Singapore ensured that children and young people with special needs were not left behind. The Economist Intelligence Unit had ranked the education system in Singapore as top in Asia and fifth overall out of 35 economies in its Worldwide Educating for the Future Index. Singapore had also established institutions and programmes for the holistic development of its young people, such as the National Youth Council of Singapore, the Young

Entrepreneurs Scheme for Schools and the Outward Bound School.

56. Youth participation was critical for young people to be agents of change. In that context, his Government had established a non-profit organization, *SCAPE, to support young people in fulfilling their potential and to provide a platform for them to express themselves. A national institution championing youth volunteerism, Youth Corps, and a corps of volunteers dedicated to running sports programmes for the vulnerable and marginalized in society had also been established.

57. He was pleased to note that the policies in place in Singapore were in line with the Secretary-General's recommendations contained in his report A/72/190. Singapore had developed and strengthened national policies for youth development, prioritized and committed adequate resources for the implementation of youth-related policies and mainstreamed the perspectives of young people into national policies and programmes. It was also harnessing data to contribute to the effective achievement of the youth dimensions of the 2030 Agenda. Recognizing that there was still scope to improve, Singapore would continue to strive to maximize opportunities for its young people, listen to their voices and encourage their active participation in society.

58. **Mr. Ríos Sánchez** (Mexico) said that, as his delegation had pointed out over a year ago, there was considerable overlap between the agendas of the Second Committee, the Third Committee, the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Commission for Social Development. The current arrangements were therefore leading to a duplication of effort and the subject of social development should be removed from the Third Committee agenda. Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, development should be at the heart of the Organization's work, and the agenda of the Third Committee should be updated to ensure that its discussions were relevant to the new paradigm and led to effective action by Member States.

59. Mexico considered economic and social inclusion the key to prosperity, and its national inclusion strategy had had a real impact on the well-being of Mexicans. To combat the mistreatment of older adults, Mexico had made their inclusion a priority, but better data was needed in order to identify the challenges and opportunities presented by demographic ageing. Mexico was also home to 37 million young people, and his Government had taken steps to ensure that their perspective was included in all policymaking. Lastly, Mexico recognized and protected the rights of the many types of families in its society.

60. **Mr. Habich Morales** (Peru) said that, inspired by the 2030 Agenda, a social revolution was under way in Peru. The aim was that, by 2021, his country would be a modern, just and fair democracy, whose citizens would enjoy equality of opportunity and access to good quality public services.

61. Peru was currently updating its social inclusion and development policy in order to meet the targets on poverty and adolescent pregnancy, as well as other issues that contributed to inequality. People must be empowered, particularly the most vulnerable social groups. Social development would not happen through economic growth alone; targeted public policies would be needed to address poverty and social exclusion.

62. Peru would continue to concentrate its efforts on reducing vulnerabilities of all kinds and on building capacity. Social development was multidimensional, and there was no "one-size-fits-all" solution; it was therefore vital to consult the population in order to better understand their needs, and continue to share experiences with other States.

63. **Ms. De Marco** (Italy), speaking as a youth delegate, said that Italy had made progress on youth-related issues and the Sustainable Development Goals. Young Italians welcomed in particular the National Sustainable Development Strategy, which recognized young people as actors of change, and the Plan for Education on Sustainability, which marked the first attempt to include sustainable development in the national education curriculum. They also welcomed the transformation of the Italian civil service from national to universal, giving young Italians the opportunity to volunteer abroad and welcoming foreigners to serve in the country. On the international level, her Government had shown its firm commitment to youth empowerment by not only launching the United Nations Youth Delegate Programme but also donating \$400,000 to the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and \$100,000 to the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect to raise awareness among young students of civic engagement as a tool to prevent mass atrocities.

64. **Mr. Murè** (Italy), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the two challenges that were of paramount importance for both Italian and global youth were youth unemployment and young people not in employment, education or training. In developed countries, data showed a rate of young people aged from 15 to 29 not in employment, education or training of around 25 per cent. To overlook such a portion of the youth population would be to dramatically reduce the ability of young people to bring about significant change. Education and civic engagement must be the

starting point in ensuring that the potential of the largest-ever generation of young people did not go to waste. In that regard, non-formal education could be a great tool. Youth delegates welcomed further work on the development of national comprehensive systems of recognition of non-formal and informal learning. They encouraged the Committee to give serious consideration to including young people not in employment, education or training in the draft resolution on youth to be presented at the current session.

65. **Ms. Sudri** (Israel), speaking as a youth delegate, said that when countries developed reforms affecting young people, they did not always ask for the opinion of young people. That had to change.

66. When she was 16, she and her friends had established a centre to connect children from low income families with youth volunteers, who served as mentors. When they had first asked the municipal authorities for help with the project, they had been told that they should instead volunteer within existing frameworks. They believed, however, that they could build a setting that was far more inviting than the existing structures. The project's success had led the municipal authorities to become involved after a few months. Similarly, hundreds of young people in her country were creating social projects under the guidance of Lead, an Israeli non-governmental organization developing youth leadership. In Israel, 55 per cent of young people volunteered and there was a creative and innovative atmosphere in which young people thrived.

67. Young people had the energy and unique perspectives to devise solutions to worldwide problems and the audacity to challenge the existing reality. They needed the right guidance and access to opportunities. Social change was born when young people were given responsibility. She therefore called for young people to be given a seat at the decision-making table in countries and cities.

68. **Mr. Odisho** (Iraq) said that his Government had created a national development strategy for the 2018-2022 period. The strategy was the result of a consultative approach and had been developed with input from parliament, the ministries, non-ministerial agencies, the private sector, academia, civil society and donors. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs had created a social protection programme to integrate social safety nets, social insurance schemes and labour market policies, thereby empowering marginalized groups, especially those with special needs and the aged. It would also enlist civil society organizations

and use social media to monitor the situations of those without family care-givers who might need protection and shelter.

69. A fund had been set up at the Ministry of Youth and Sports to help youth in developing small-scale projects. A youth parliament had been established to prepare young people for future roles in politics and social leadership positions. After the liberation by Iraqi forces of areas formerly under the control of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, youth from those areas had visited southern parts of Iraq whose inhabitants had participated in the liberation effort, which testified to their maturity and intelligence.

70. The Government strived to maintain peace and repair infrastructure in the liberated areas and to ensure the speedy return of displaced families to their homes. It appreciated the support of the international community, including civil society and donor countries, and the sacrifices that had been made in fighting terrorism.

71. **Ms. Martinic** (Argentina) said that economic policies could not produce deep and lasting changes without a social inclusion component. Social development should be seen as a transformative process leading to full realization of the economic, political, social, civil and cultural rights of all people. Poverty was a multidimensional phenomenon that required a similarly multidimensional response, and social policy must address its structural causes.

72. Cognizant of the complexity of poverty and the emergence of new vulnerabilities, her Government had set a goal of zero poverty. It was important to address the problems of people from infancy to old age, and guarantee their full inclusion and participation at every stage of their lives. The specific needs of persons with disabilities must also be met, while protecting the rights of the child and empowering young people through access to education and decent work were fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development. It was vital to protect the family in all its different forms.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.